



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 12, 2011

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Engineering Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: State Route 225 Relinquishment Update

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- A. Receive an update on the State Route (SR) 225 Relinquishment; and
- B. Provide direction to staff regarding the SR 225 Relinquishment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Pursuant to Council direction, Public Works staff and Caltrans have been working on issues to relinquish SR 225 from Caltrans to the City for several years. SR 225 consists of approximately 4.6 miles of roadway from the intersection of Castillo and Montecito Streets, west along Cliff Drive, then north along Las Positas to where it intersects US Highway 101 (Attachment 1). This report summarizes the chronological events of the relinquishment efforts to date, and further outlines the current related information staff has at this time.

City improvement projects proposed on SR 225 have been subject to the Caltrans encroachment permit process, and many projects have been delayed or canceled due to design conflicts or inconsistencies with Caltrans' priorities. Caltrans' key mission is to operate and maintain the State's highway system. Caltrans' standards are generally focused on traffic movement, with less priority on beautification, landscaping, pedestrian convenience, and neighborhood preferences. The City and Caltrans have a differing vision for future SR 225 improvements, and this has created interest by both agencies in exploring the relinquishment of SR 225 to the City.

If relinquishment occurs, future projects would be submitted through the City's discretionary review process as appropriate rather than the Caltrans Encroachment Permit review process. To reduce permit processing and to enhance local control over local streets, many cities have accepted secondary highways such as SR 225 and

associated maintenance costs and liability exposure into their local roadway system. However, should the relinquishment occur, the City would incur some one-time project improvement expenses and all ongoing infrastructure maintenance expenses. These costs and issues are explained below in more detail.

DISCUSSION:

BACKGROUND

In September 2004, staff presented a report to Council on the SR 225 relinquishment process and requested Council direction on the SR 225 relinquishment. Council's direction was to develop an appropriate scope of work for a Relinquishment Report (Report), including an in-depth analysis of the condition of the roadway, any required improvements to return the roadway to a state of good repair, and estimates of further ongoing maintenance costs.

In December 2004, the Transportation & Circulation Committee (TCC) considered the SR 225 relinquishment and its consistency with the City's Circulation Element (CE). The TCC found that the SR 255 relinquishment was consistent with the goals of the City's CE. The TCC recognized that relinquishment would allow the City to implement the goals and vision of the City's 1998 General Plan CE update by allowing improvements that are consistent with local needs and roadway standards.

In January 2005, Council directed staff to initiate the relinquishment of SR 225 from Caltrans to the City and to start the annexation of some parcels along SR 225 into the City to simplify the relinquishment process. Pursuant to Planning Commission and Council action, the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission approved the annexation in April 2008.

Relinquishment Report

In September 2005, Council approved a consultant contract to prepare the Report to provide a technical assessment of the route that included:

- Cataloging existing conditions, showing drainage, right of way, utilities, and other facilities
- Documenting existing pavement conditions and future needed maintenance
- Describing capital improvements from Caltrans to the City for a "state of good repair"
- Estimating and analyzing future maintenance costs that could be incurred by the City over the next 10 years

The Report identified City improvement needs and future City maintenance improvement objectives, and points of negotiation to draft a required co-operative agreement. Negotiation points included potential compensation for existing infrastructure deficiencies and any future route improvements. A summary of the items is included in staff's letter to Caltrans, dated January 10, 2011 (Attachment 2).

Caltrans Negotiations

In 2008, staff began negotiations with Caltrans regarding cost estimates for infrastructure upgrades to bring the SR 225 roadway to a state of good repair. Caltrans estimated their contribution to the City at approximately \$1 million to rectify drainage and bridge work deficiencies prior to relinquishment. City staff's estimated cost for these items was \$1.3 million.

In 2009, City staff and Caltrans met monthly to resolve issues associated with the relinquishment, and to develop a Cooperative Agreement. However, Caltrans' offer to the City to fund necessary upgrades to SR 225 continued to be significantly less than the amount estimated by City staff to be required for relinquishment. The City requested that Caltrans contribute to the cost of SR 225 pavement maintenance improvements prior to relinquishment. Primarily due to a restriction of available State funds in 2009, it was not feasible to come to a resolution on a Cooperative Agreement at that time. Subsequently, Caltrans and the City agreed to place the negotiations on a one-year hold.

In early summer of 2010, Caltrans and the City resumed relinquishment negotiations. In a letter dated July 22, 2010, Caltrans reiterated their offer of \$1 million to fund the relinquishment. In a follow-up conference call on December 3, 2010, Caltrans assured City staff that they are scheduled to complete SR 225 pavement maintenance prior to relinquishment. A recent update is that Caltrans is scheduled to receive construction bids for SR 225 pavement resurfacing on April 12, 2011. The work is scheduled for this summer. Caltrans also stated they could not fund what they considered improvements, such as new traffic signal controls for conversion to the City's traffic control system.

SR 225 Infrastructure Inventory

Below is a general list of the SR 225 infrastructure inventory:

Pavement:	1,330,000 square feet
Sidewalk:	28,500 lineal feet
Drainage:	6,248 feet of pipe
	37 inlets
	31 structures
Intersections:	29 (8 are signalized)
Viaduct adjacent to Santa Barbara City College:	500 feet
Las Positas Bridge (overcrossing at Union Pacific Railroad)	
Large retaining walls on Las Positas Road and on Cliff Drive near Loma Alta	

Additional City Improvements and Considerations

Additional future costs that are anticipated to be incurred by the City are based on two categories consisting of a) project improvements and b) ongoing maintenance.

Project Improvements

- **Traffic Signal Controller Conversion:** The Caltrans traffic signals are not connected to the City's traffic control system. It is necessary to connect these traffic signals to the City system for signalization coordination, maintenance, and liability issues. The cost to connect and convert the existing traffic control system to the City's system is estimated to be \$112,300. This is a traffic signal system improvement project.
- **Future City Enhancement/Improvement Projects:** The Las Positas/Cliff Drive intersection Improvement Project is currently in design. It is a \$750,000 construction grant funded project that is scheduled for completion in Fiscal Year 2014. Also, based on past public comment, there is an expectation that the City would provide other public improvements soon after relinquishment and as described by the 6-Year Capital Improvement Program (Fiscal Year 2012 – 2017). Potential corridor improvements may include pedestrian crossing enhancements, sidewalks, lane reconfiguration, bike lanes, and landscaping. The cost of these additional improvements is unknown, and there is currently no funding source for these improvements.

Ongoing Maintenance

- **Street Infrastructure Maintenance (excluding pavement maintenance):** Upon relinquishment, Streets crews would be required to perform maintenance of the SR 225 drainage system, vegetation, signage, pothole repair, and pavement markings, and are expected to include street sweeping for this route. The estimated annual cost for this maintenance is estimated to be approximately \$147,000.
- **Pavement Maintenance:** The 4.6 miles of SR 225 includes approximately 1.33 million square feet of pavement. This equates to an additional 3% of City roadway to maintain. The estimated annual cost to maintain the City roads at a Pavement Condition Index of 70 is approximately \$4.71 million per year. The pavement maintenance annual cost for SR 225 is estimated to be approximately \$165,000 per year. Aside from the recent one-time American Recovery and Reinvestment Act contribution in 2010, the average amount the City has funded for pavement maintenance over the past 5 years has been approximately \$2.3 million per year.

- Traffic Signal Control System Maintenance: The estimated annual cost to maintain the SR 225 traffic control system is approximately \$43,000 per year.

Las Positas Bridge (overcrossing at Union Pacific Railroad): Subsequent to the Relinquishment Report, the SR 225 relinquishment limits were modified by Caltrans at Las Positas Road to include the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge overcrossing. Caltrans has offered \$300,000 for bridge joint seal replacement and deck seal. The City's estimate for this work is \$525,000. This bridge maintenance will bring the bridge to a state of good repair and nominal future City costs are expected for continued maintenance.

Relinquishment Cost Estimate Summary

The tables below identify 1) the Caltrans offer for one-time repairs as compared to the City's estimated costs, 2) one-time project improvements, and 3) ongoing City annual maintenance costs.

Caltrans Offer vs. City Estimate		
Description	Caltrans Funding Offer	City Estimate
Drainage Repairs	\$558,000	\$618,775
Bridge Overcrossing Maintenance	\$300,000	\$525,000
Subtotal	\$858,000	\$1,143,775
Contingency	\$139,000	\$185,300
Total	\$997,000	\$1,329,075
Difference		\$332,075

Project Improvements (Currently Unfunded)	
Description	Estimated Cost
Drainage Repairs, Bridge Overcrossing Maintenance (from above)	\$332,075
Traffic Signal Conversion	\$112,300
Project Improvements Total	\$444,375

Ongoing City Maintenance Cost (Currently Unfunded)	
Description	Estimated Annual Cost
Street Infrastructure Maintenance	\$147,000
Pavement Maintenance	\$165,000
Traffic Signal Maintenance	\$43,000
Total Ongoing City Maintenance Cost	\$355,000/yr

POTENTIAL LEGAL AND LIABILITY CONCERNS:

The City Attorney's office has also expressed some concern with the City accepting the relinquishment of SR 225 from Caltrans without first having some written understanding between the City and the State regarding potential liability for accidents allegedly caused by design defects or by a past failure to properly maintain SR 225 in a safe condition. This concern is particularly true in view of the serious accident history for SR 225 at certain intersections, especially those accidents involving pedestrians and vehicles. In light of these concerns, the City Attorney's office is suggesting that the relinquishment of SR 225 to the City be expressly conditioned upon the State agreeing to defend and indemnify the City with respect to those accidents which involve claims of a "dangerous condition of public property" as a result of an alleged "design defect." In addition, staff and the Attorney's office believes that Caltrans and the State should expressly agree to cooperate with the City in the future in preserving and maintaining the proper design and maintenance records necessary to support any design immunity defenses which may apply to future liability claims relating to accidents occurring on SR 225.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Caltrans has offered approximately \$1 million as payment to the City in consideration of maintenance work that the City would perform to bring the SR 225 roadway and infrastructure to a state of good repair. The City will not receive any additional ongoing funding if this route is relinquished. Should the City accept SR 225, the cost for rectifying existing infrastructure deficiencies and additional ongoing repair, maintenance, and liability responsibilities will be incurred by the City. Any additional proposed City improvements will compete with other City funding priorities. Future improvements would be implemented over time, as funding is identified.

NEXT STEPS

If the Council desires to proceed with the relinquishment process, the next steps include the following:

- Caltrans initiates the Project Study Report (PSR)
- Caltrans submits the PSR outlining relinquishment agreement terms
- Present draft PSR to TCC including request for public comment
- TCC reviews final PSR with public comment
- Council considers PSR recommendations
- City and Caltrans negotiate final agreement terms
- Request state legislator to sponsor legislation for California Transportation Committee (CTC) to relinquish SR 225 subject to the City's acceptance
- State passes legislation to relinquish SR 225
- CTC approves relinquishment
- City passes resolution accepting SR 225

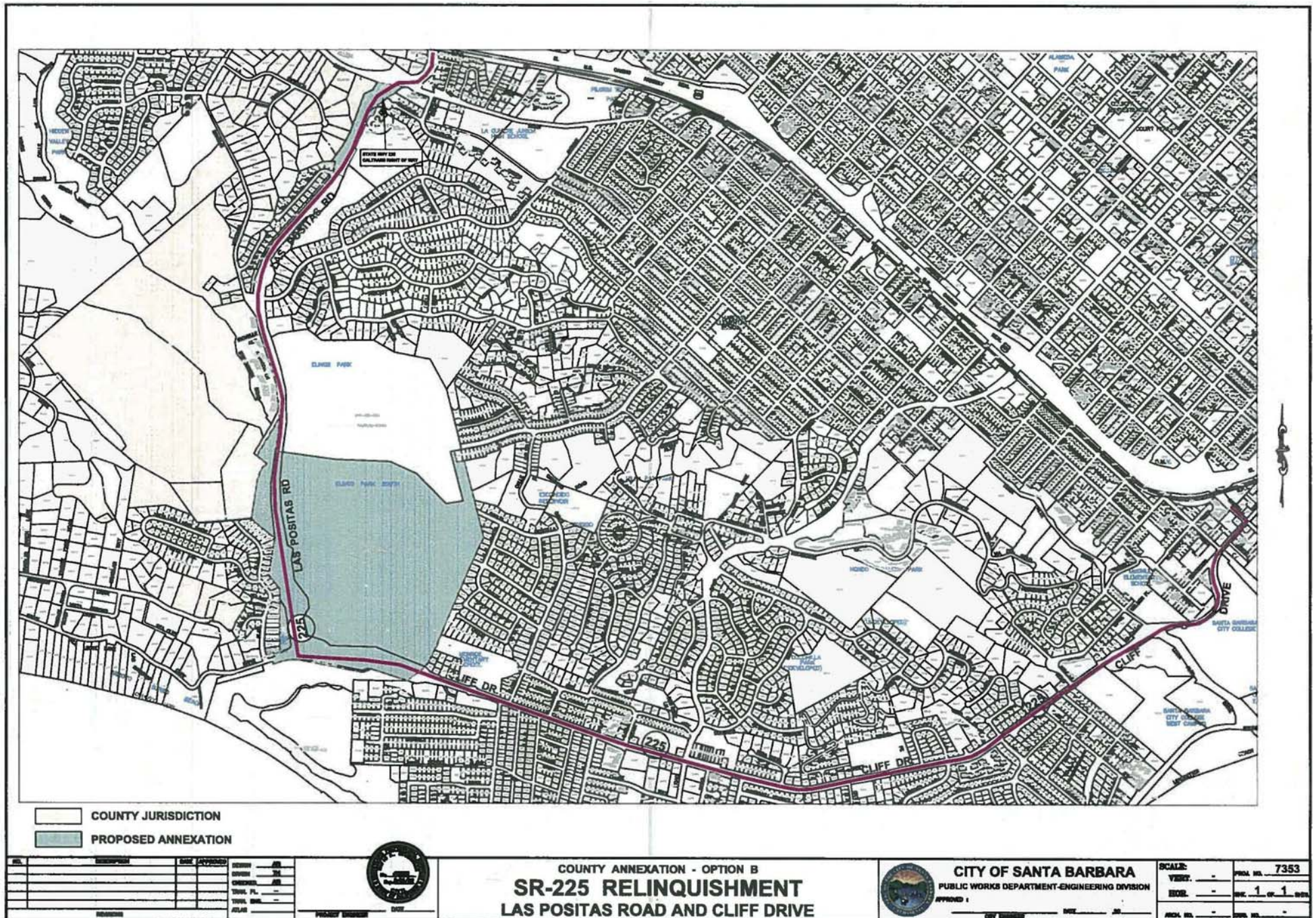
Caltrans has acknowledged that these steps can be completed in one to two years, upon the City and Caltrans mutually agreeing to continue with the relinquishment process.

ATTACHMENT(S) 1. Highway SR 225 Vicinity Map
 2. Letter to Caltrans dated January 20, 2011

PREPARED BY: Pat Kelly, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer/JE/sk

SUBMITTED BY: Christine F. Andersen, Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office





City of Santa Barbara

Public Works Department

ATTACHMENT 2

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January 10, 2011

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Ms. Aileen K. Loe
Deputy District Director
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SUBJECT: State Route 225 Relinquishment

Dear Ms. Loe:

We appreciate the time Director Richard Krumholz, Chief Steve Price, and you gave to our conference call on December 3, 2010, to discuss specifics on State Route 225 (SR 225). The City and Caltrans have expended significant effort towards this relinquishment, and after discussing the details of the relinquishment funding, it now appears that we may still be able to reach a consensus, subject to our City Council passing the appropriate Resolution to move forward with relinquishment.

We discussed your July 22, 2010, letter, where a total of \$997,000 was identified for payment to the City in consideration of maintenance work that the City would perform to bring the roadway into a reasonable condition of good repair. This includes \$697,000 for drainage work and \$300,000, primarily for bridge work.

At the time, what appeared to be missing from the City's perspective, was sufficient funding for pavement maintenance. However, it was realized in our discussion that Caltrans is already programmed to perform a significant amount of maintenance work in 2011.

The City and Caltrans agree that there is an immediate need for a surface seal on the roadway's pavement. It has been more than 5 years since the roadway overlay, and it is beginning to show localized distress. Caltrans is scheduling for this fiscal year a "Micro-surfacing" Pavement Maintenance Project that is anticipated to meet the intent of the approximately \$1.9M programmed in the 2006 Caltrans maintenance budget documents.

If the above-referenced understanding is mutual, then we will proceed to schedule the appropriate Council Resolution at the February 15, 2011, Council meeting for their consideration and approval. Upon approval, we will continue to work with Caltrans on arrangements to have the necessary legislative bill sponsored through the state legislature to move forward with the relinquishment.

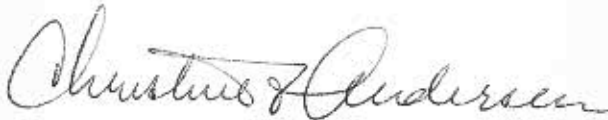
An item we didn't discuss on our conference call was the Caltrans review of the City's Los Positas/Cliff Drive Improvement project, whose construction is grant

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funded through the State Transportation Improvement Program. The timing of the potential relinquishment will affect the scheduling of the project review and construction, significantly. Your support to expedite your project reviews while the anticipated relinquishment is in process will be appreciated.

We look forward to working out some of these details in the near future and completing the necessary Cooperative Agreement.

Sincerely,



Christine F. Andersen
Public Works Director

PK/TC/sk

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